



Review

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setting? Will Theravada ethics resist the inequalities of modernity any better than Christian ethics has?

The other topic of note is “comparative religious ethics.” Three essays address this topic directly, and two others highlight comparisons between Buddhist and Christian approaches. Yet the reader is hardly left with the sense that the topic has been thoroughly covered. Most of the essays on the Buddhist studies side make no effort at comparison, and some of the essays on the theoretical comparison side do not address the more subtle issues raised in the Buddhist studies essays.

The authors are to be thanked for making a good start on these two topics.

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ASCETIC FIGURES BEFORE AND IN EARLY BUDDHISM: THE EMERGENCE OF GAUTAMA AS THE BUDDHA. By Martin G. Wiltshire. New York: Mouton de Gruyter, 1990. Pp. xxxvi + 338.

This fascinating book is the published version of Martin Wiltshire's doctoral dissertation submitted to the University of Lancaster. Within its pages, the author offers a detailed explanation of the Pāli concept of *paccekabuddha*, and his excellent interpretation goes far beyond the traditional definition of the term. Wiltshire's work founds itself on a well-researched philological and structuralist study and, through an analysis of various ancient legends (primarily *Jātaka* stories) describing prominent mythological ascetics, goes on to offer a new perspective on the concept of *paccekabuddha*.

The early Buddhist traditions usually acknowledge two types of Buddha: the *sammāsambuddha* and the *paccekabuddha*. According to the standard traditional interpretation, both terms refer to an enlightened being who has attained *nibbāna* without having received previous instruction as to the path to follow; the major distinction between the two, however, lies in the fact that the *sammāsambuddha* is the teacher par excellence (*Dīgha Nikāya* i,128; *Anguttara Nikāya* iv,120) whose enlightenment is attained for the benefit of many, while the *paccekabuddha* lacks the ability to spread the *dhmma* to others (*Puggalapaññatti* 29, *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*), thus attaining enlightenment “for himself only.” In his book, Martin Wiltshire challenges this traditional interpretation.

First, Wiltshire puts forth the theory that the concept of *paccekabuddha* was an elaboration subsequent to the earliest strata of *sutta* literature since occurrences of the term are found only in texts of later origin (save for a very few exceptions). He then examines the proto-Buddhist concepts referring to various forms of ascetics—*isi*, *samana*, and *muni*—and establishes important parallels between the legends surrounding the life of these ascetics and those of *pacceka-*

buddhas. According to Wiltshire's analysis, the concept of *paccekabuddha* was framed in order to differentiate the Buddha from other enlightened persons that attained *nibbāna* without any instruction and, thus, to confer upon Gotama a greater hierarchical stature within buddhology.

Wiltshire also argues that what we understand to be the main teaching of the Buddha was either altered or enhanced by his followers in order to differentiate Siddhattha Gotama's teaching from that of the many other ascetics and enlightened people who antedated him, the aim being to establish the superiority of the "Buddhist tradition" over others. Naturally, we can predict that this structuralist interpretation will not be particularly well received by traditionalists. Nevertheless, the author supports his position brilliantly, and his work offers a radically new perspective on the emergence of Buddhism as an independent and distinct cultus.

The only problem I had with this book is that I found the current title misleading. The reader expects a discussion of the various ascetic figures preceding and contemporary with the Buddha and is surprised when no such canvassing is presented. Perhaps Wiltshire's original thesis title, "The Origins of the Paccekabuddha Concept," would be more accurately descriptive of the book. Also worth noting are errors found in the spelling of certain Pāli terms. These are, however, minor mistakes that certainly do not prevent the reader from grasping the implications of Wiltshire's thesis.

I would strongly recommend this book to all those who are teaching courses on early Buddhism as well as to students involved in higher studies on the subject, for it definitely offers a logical link between "institutionalized Buddhism" and not only the *śramanic* tradition that preceded Gotama but certain *vedic* practices as well.

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BUDDHIST MONASTIC LIFE ACCORDING TO THE TEXTS OF THE THERAVĀDA TRADITION. By Mohan Wijayaratna. Translated by Claude Grangier and Steven Collins. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990. Pp. xxiv + 190.

Buddhist Monastic Life According to the Texts of the Theravāda Tradition consists of the English translation of the original French version of *Le moine bouddhiste selon les textes du Theravāda* (Paris: Cerf, 1983). Claude Grangier and Professor Collins have translated the work beautifully. In addition, the current volume also improves on the original by the inclusion of an index, a glossary, and short appendices on nuns and precepts.

By using the *vinayaṭīka* and the *suttapīṭaka*, Mohan Wijayaratna offers an excellent description of the ideal monastic life as portrayed in the Pāli Canon.